DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 129 911 TM 005 755

AUTHOR	Barber, Lucie W.; Cernik, Helen C.
TITLE	Do Mothers and Fathers Agree on Ratings of Their Preschool Child on the Barber Scales of Self-Regard?
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	9p.; For related documents, see TM 005 636-653
AVAILABLE FROM	Union College Character Research Project, 207 State St., Schenectady, New York 12305 ($1.00), Seven Scales of Self Regard for 10 persons $25.00, manual $6.50
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Development; *Correlation; *Fathers; *Mothers; Parent Attitudes; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Rating Scales; Self Concept; *Self Concept Tests; Statistical Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	*Barber Scales of Self Regard Preschool Form; Dixon and Mood Sign Test

ABSTRACT

Adults appear to have different perceptions of a child when rating a child on the Barber Scales of Self-Regard based on correlation coefficients between different sets of adults (parents and teachers). It is the purpose of this study to explore at greater depth the differences between mother and father as to the way they perceive their child. Do they agree or disagree--and to what extent--when they each rate their preschooler on the Scales of Self-Regard? Results of this study show that when parents rate their child on the Barber Scales of Self-Regard, disagreements can be expected. Disagreements vary from Scale to Scale. Mother or father does not consistently rate higher on any of the Scales, with the exception of the Scale "Children's Responses to Requests" where mothers appear to be the higher rater. There is some clue that slight differences between parent raters occur more frequently with female children than with male children. Although differences can be expected, the results of this study indicate that differences are for the most part by only one-scale point. Perhaps both parents are correct and the child is, in reality, somewhere in between the levels described by the scale points. (Author/MV)

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ED129911

DO MOTHERS AND FATHERS AGREE ON RATINGS OF THEIR PRESCHOOL CHILD ON THE BARBER SCALES OF SELF-REGARD?

by

Lucie W. Barber and Helen C. Cernik

Introduction

Adults appear to have different perceptions of a child when rating a child on the Scales of Self-Regard (Barber '76). This statement is based on correlation coefficients between different sets of adults (parents and teachers). It is the purpose of this study to explore at greater depth the differences between mother and father as to the way they perceive their child. Do they agree or disagree -- and to what extent -- when they each rate their preschooler on the Scales of Self-Regard? Any knowledge in this area would be valuable to parents and to leaders of parent groups.

Sample

Forty-eight sets of parents rated their child on all seven Scales in a 1975 field test. These middle-class parents came from the following locations: 12 sets of parents from Virginia, one set from Florida, eight from Colorado, three from the state of Washington and 24 were from Texas. The children rated were: 24 males and 24 females. Twenty of the children were 5 years old, 13 were 4 years old, 14 were 3 years old and one child was 2 years old. All children attended an Episcopalian preschool program.

TM005 755

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Procedure

Correlation coefficients were taken from the computer printouts for the 1975 field test of the Scales of Self-Regard. Scale point ratings by mother and father were listed for each of the 48 children. The ratings came from the code sheets prepared in the processing for the computer programs. Frequencies and percentages were computed. Chi square tests were used. The Dixon and Mood Sign test was also computed for each Scale.

Results and Discussion

The correlation coefficients between mothers' and fathers' scale point ratings are found in Table 1.

Table 1. Product Moment Correlation Coefficients Between Mother and Father on the Seven Scales of Self-Regard

Scale Title	Coefficient
Purposeful Learning of Skills	.6234
Completing Tasks	.3619
Coping with Fears	.3904
Children's Responses toRequests	.4601
Dealing with Frustrations	.4901
Socially Acceptable Behavior	.5353
Developing Imagination in Play	.5980

While all the coefficients are statistically significant at the .01 level of probability, one can see that agreement between father and mother is far from 100%. When 48 sets of parents rate seven Scales there are 336 possibilities for either agreement or disagreement. There were 145 cases of agreement and 191 cases of disagreement. In the 191 cases of disagreement, however, 157 (82% of the disagreements

were only-one scale point differences, while 34 (18%) were two-scale point differences. There were no differences greater than two-scale points on the 5-point Scales. These parents did disagree, but the great majority of disagreements were slight.

None of the parents in this sample agreed on every Scale. The frequency of parents who did agree and the number of Scales they agreed on are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The Numbers of Scales Where Parents Agreed by Frequency and Percentage of Total

Number of Scales	Frequency of Parents	Percentage
6	3	6.25
5	6	12.50
4	10	20.83
3	9	18.75
2	11	22.92
1	7	14.58
0	2	4.17
	Total 48	

Sixty-two percent of these 48 parent sets agreed on 2, 3 or 4 of the seven Scales, while 18-3/4% agreed on 5 or 6 of the seven Scales.

An interesting finding concerns which parent rates a child higher, the mother or father? The ratings for the 48 children were inspected across all seven Scales. The father consistently rated higher than the mother in five cases (10.42%). The mother consistently rated higher than the father in 15 cases (31.25%). Parents, in 28 cases (58.33%), were inconsistent as to which parent rated higher. For example, on

one Scale the mother rated higher but on another Scale the father was the higher rater. This unexpected finding suggests that the majority of these parents are not showing biases toward a child on these Scales.

No differences were found in the frequency of disagreements (both one and two scale points) between parents of 2 and 3 year old children when compared to the frequency of disagreements between parents of 4 and 5 year old children. The same comparison was made for male and female children. The parents disagreed on the average of 3.5 per male child and 4.46 per female child. However, when a four cell chi square test was computed, male and female vs. one-scale point difference and two-scale points difference in parent rating, the result was $x^2 = 1.3052$, which is statistically nonsignificant. Inspection of cells led to a two-cell chi square test between the 24 males and the 24 females on just one scale point difference in parent rating. Chi square = 2.80, $p \leq .10$ with 1 df, is a clue that disagreements between parents on scale point rating, while more prevalent on the average for female children, tend to be minimal differences.

Up to this point, we have inspected the results of the 48 parent sets across all seven Scales. We have not reported results of studying the separate Scales. These separate Scale results will now be reported.

The Dixon and Mood Sign test for paired observations was used to test whether one parent rated higher or lower more often than would be expected by chance on any of the Scales.

Table 3. Sign Test Results for Mother-Father Ratings on the Scales of Self-Regard

Scale	z	2-tailed p
Purposeful Learning of Skills	.7217	.4716
Completing Tasks	.1443	.8886
Coping with Fears	.7217	.4716
Children's Responses to Requests	1.8764	.0602
Dealing with Frustrations	.1443	.8886
Socially Acceptable Behavior	1.0104	.2124
Developing Imagination in Play	.1443	.8886

The results indicate that at the .05 level of probability none of the z scores reach significance on a 2-tailed test. It should be pointed out, however, that had we predicted that one or the other parent would rate higher, and relied on a one-tailed test, one of the Scales does have a z score significant at $p \leq .05$. This Scale is "Children's Responses to Requests" and it is mothers, more often than fathers, who rate higher. One interpretation could be that mothers, who probably spend more time with the young child, know strategies for promoting "yes" responses. Another interpretation might be that working fathers are viewed by a young child as less deserving of "yes" responses compared to the more deserving, ever-present mothers.

The use of the Sign test does suggest that six of the Self-Regard Scales are not rated consistently higher by either spouse. The Scale "Children's Responses to Requests" is thereby pinpointed as a special case where a mother may be apt to rate a child higher than her husband does.

The final analysis goes beyond the question of which parent rated higher and addresses the problem, Scale by Scale, on amounts of agreement and disagreement. Frequencies of parent rating agreements and

and disagreements for each Scale will be found in Table 4. As an aid to the reader, the frequencies are also expressed in percentages so that comparisons can be made.

Table 4. Mother-Father Scale Point Rating Agreements and Disagreements on each Self-Regard Scale by Frequencies and Percentages of the Sample of 48

	Purposeful Learning of Skills	Completing Tasks	Coping with Fears	Children's Responses to Requests	Dealing with Frustrations	Socially Acceptable Behavior	Developing Imagination in Play
Agree	28	24	19	13	17	18	27
% of 48	58%	50%	40%	27%	35%	38%	56%
Disagree by 1 point	19	20	22	30	28	24	13
% of 48	40%	42%	46%	63%	58%	50%	27%
Disagree by 2 points	1	4	7	5	3	6	8
% of 48	2%	8%	15%	10%	6%	13%	17%

When one reads across row one, it would appear that parents agree most readily on the Scales "Purposeful Learning of Skills," "Developing Imagination in Play" and "Completing Tasks." As one reads down each column, however, a fuller picture appears. For example, these results indicate that the greatest amount of two-scale point disagreement between parents occurred for the Scales "Developing Imagination in Play" and "Coping with Fears." The most disagreement of any kind occurs for the Scale "Children's Responses to Requests." The Scales "Dealing with Frustrations" and "Socially Acceptable Behavior" elicit more disagreements than agreements. "Socially Acceptable Behavior" draws twice as many two-scale point differences as "Dealing

with Frustrations." Two-scale point differences, however, are minimum, never exceeding 17% of the sample for any one Scale and, as has been reported, no three-scale point differences were found.

Another finding indicated by the results in Table 4 is that parents' agreement in their perception of their child evidently changes from Scale to Scale. This realization is important to users of the Scales lest they become frustrated when mother-father differences are encountered on some Scales but not others. Differences are to be expected although, as we have seen, they tend to be slight.

Summary

When parents rate their child on the Barber Scales of Self-Regard, disagreements can be expected. Disagreements vary from Scale to Scale. Mother or father does not consistently rate higher on any of the Scales, with the exception of the Scale "Children's Responses to Requests" where mothers appear to be the higher rater. There is some clue that slight differences between parent raters occur more frequently with female children than with male children. Although differences can be expected, the results of this study indicate that differences are for the most part by only one-scale point. Perhaps, both parents are correct and the child is, in reality, somewhere in between the levels described by the scale points.

These results represent an expectation of middle-class parents in a number of geographical locations. We need dual ratings from large samples and samples at different SES levels. However, this study as a first step may be reassuring to parents and group leaders. Expect differences. They probably will not be large differences between mother and father.

References

Barber, Lucie W. "Preschool Scales of Self-Regard. A report of field testing research." Character Potential 7(4) 1976.

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